

City Council Meeting Minutes

**February 13, 2017
City Hall, Council Chambers
749 Main Street
7:00 PM**

Call to Order – Mayor Muckle called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call was taken and the following members were present:

City Council: ***Mayor Robert Muckle
Mayor Pro Tem Jeff Lipton
Councilmember Jay Keany
Councilmember Chris Leh
Councilmember Susan Loo
Councilmember Dennis Maloney
Councilmember Ashley Stolzmann***

Staff Present: ***Heather Balser, City Manager
Meredyth Muth, City Clerk***

Others Present: ***June Ramos, Facilitator***

CITY COUNCIL & CITY MANAGER INTEGRATION PROCESS

Mayor Muckle called the meeting to order. June Ramos stated this is the culmination of the process started last year. The Council already knows Balser and has worked with her so this conversation will focus on furthering the assimilation of her as the new City Manager with the City Council, focus on transferring from her former role to her current role as manager, and creating an environment of collaboration. The goal is to identify consensus-based action items and talk about what is working and what we need from each other to succeed.

Ramos noted the ground rules, specifically the idea that the purpose of this is to serve the public.

City Manager Balser thanked Council for the opportunity. She asked council to assume good intent when working with staff and noted she has no agenda; what you see is what you get. She stated she is here to implement the vision of the council.

Ramos stated this is the chance to discuss the how to implement that vision.

Members gave advice on overarching goals including: new leadership for the City; employees need to know the organizational leadership has changed and the manager needs to set the tone. Council stated Balsler needs to set the new norm as the new boss.

Members noted what they appreciate about Balsler. These are the things to keep doing:

- Frequently scheduled individual meetings;
- A quick/timely response to requests/questions;
- Continue to have good enthusiasm;
- Information coming to Council meetings is better/higher quality, more concise, presentations better, good background information from previous meetings is always included;
- The brief updates from directors at Council meetings addressing pertinent issues are appreciated;
- The Planning Department chart to explain pertinent criteria is a big improvement;
- Keep Council informed about upcoming issues/current happenings; timely information of all issues;
- Continue to ask for guidance when managing conflicting priorities.

New expectations

- In meetings have a better framing of the discussion/what staff heard/ what the direction is at a meeting;
- Make sure direction from Council is acculturated by staff; staff should take ownership of policy directives;
- Information to boards and commissions needs to be improved
- In Council memos add information from other points of view; alternatives should be presented without steering towards a specific outcome; explain how staff got to their recommendation; anticipate tough questions;
- Want good staff recommendations from professional expertise, particularly on items of a technical nature; not just a list of questions;
- When asking for additional funding would like information on where the new funding will be found;
- Be careful of recommendations on controversial issues the community may not support;
- Watch for personal bias in staff recommendations;
- Staff should not be second guessing policy set by Council;
- Special Review Use can have a recommendation but decision and waivers are a policy decision for Council;
- Staff needs to have a sense of the politics of the community and how to best handle the information;
- Be sure the full Council is getting all the same information; perhaps a weekly digest of what was discussed with various Councilmembers;
- More employee training/mentoring for staff;

- No hiring FTEs without Council discussion;
- More thoughtful about budget amendments;
- Set an expectation of transparency/open government; when we can, have discussion in open meetings
- Be more judicious in the use of executive sessions and summarize executive session topics better when coming back into regular meeting;
- Have a process to tell Council when it is overstepping its policy guidance role and entering into operational discussions.

Advice

- Establish your leadership and align the management team to the new leadership;
- Manage staff, manage the process, but don't manage projects and tasks;
- Improve communication with the public; embrace community engagement and technology. The City Manager and directors need to engage the community directly.
- City Manager should be more visible in the community;
- Organizational disruption is good; don't allow for organizational inertia;
- Raise the bar
- Pushback on Council when we aren't clear; make sure Council understand the tradeoffs.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT & ADVANCED AGENDA

Members reviewed the advanced agenda.

ADJOURN

Members adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Robert P. Muckle, Mayor

Meredyth Muth, City Clerk